



THE DRAKE GROUP EDUCATION FUND

Realizing The Promise
Of College Athletics

2023

Drake Hero Award NICHOLAS ASKEW

Honoring an extraordinary individual who has helped advance the collegiate sports reform movement through persistent actions over time. The individual, through hard work and persistent effort, has created a significant impact within the world of sports reform and, in doing so, has enhanced the integrity of intercollegiate athletics.

As the Director of Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving at Howard University, the nation's only NCAA Division I Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with a swimming and diving team, and a program that has set 170 school records during his tenure, and as the Director of Men's and Women's Tennis, your teams have consistently achieved All-Academic Team and individual Scholar-Athlete honors. As a youth sports coach, you have shaped the aspirations and empowered the development of young Black and underserved athletes in the sport of tennis. As a professional coach who has worked with top athletes around the globe, you have nurtured top-ranked district, state, and national level athletes in swimming and tennis. Your consistent youth sport program service has been extraordinary and your exemplary emphasis on the use of sport to teach athletes the critical life skills of leadership, accountability, discipline, and patience has been nationally recognized.

As important, these efforts have increased the number of Black and other athletes of color entering and participating from the entry to the elite levels of the participation pyramid in sports in which they are significantly underrepresented, thereby challenging stereotypes of the interests and abilities of Black and other athletes of color. Your efforts have helped to demonstrate that Black athletes do have interest in and can achieve in sports like swimming, diving, and tennis. The achievements of your teams have created public notoriety, thereby raising important questions about the failure of intercollegiate athletics to address the underrepresentation of Black athletes in college sports. As one of only four Black head coaches in men's swimming and five in women's swimming among all three NCAA competitive divisions and one of only 32 Black head coaches in men's tennis and 37 in women's tennis among all three NCAA competitive divisions, you are an important role model for Black and other athletes and coaches of color to follow in your footsteps.